

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 and 12-21 are all of the pending claims, with claims 1 and 14 being written in independent form. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 4, 12, 14 and 17 are amended to correct minor informalities and not in response to the claim rejections. No new matter is added.

I. Claim Rejections On Prior Art Grounds:

The Examiner rejects claims 1-10 and 12-21 under U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by US 5,629,831 to Eggert et al. (“Eggert”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection in view of the following remarks.

Anticipation under 35 U.S.C. § 102 requires the presence in a single prior art disclosure of each and every element of a claimed invention arranged as in the claim (Connell v. Sears, Roebuck & Co., 722 F.2d 1542, 1548, 220 USPQ 193, 198 (Fed. Cir. 1983)). As Eggert fails to disclose each and every feature recited in the rejected claims, Eggert does not anticipate the claims and therefore cannot be used as a basis for rejection.

Eggert discloses a modular control circuit with a bus conductor that includes a terminal block assembly and a modular control system. In Eggert, an electronics module 2 is removably connected by plug connections 11 to a terminal block assembly 24-27. Power from the terminal block assembly can be supplied to control circuits carried within the electronics module 2. The electronics module 2 includes a number of guide rails 30 on the two sides of the housing that plug in to plug-in terminals 11 that protrude upwardly from terminal blocks (col. 11, lines 37-40). T-shape projections 19 on the housing of the electronic module 2 are inserted vertically within T-shape guide grooves (col. 9, lines 61-65; Fig 2).

It is alleged in the Office Action that Eggert discloses all of the features recited in the rejected claims. For example, it is alleged that Eggert discloses a housing including at least one module location “at 15” of Fig. 1. However, the Office Action fails to provide any corresponding structure to the housing allegedly disclosed in Eggert. Further, the Office Action also fails to disclose corresponding structure for the claimed “at least one connection module,” or the claimed “connection device.”

In rejecting claims for lack of novelty, the Examiner must cite the best references at his or her command. When the reference is complex or shows or describes inventions other than claimed

by the Applicant, the particular part relied on must be designated as nearly as practicable. The pertinence of each reference is not apparent must be clearly explained and the rejected claims specified (37 CFR § 1.104(c)(2)). As the Office Action fails to particularly point out any corresponding structure in Eggert to the subject matter recited in rejected claims, the Office Action fails to comply with the rules of patent examination.

Moreover, as may be best interpreted from the Office Action, it appears that the electronics module 2 is to be alleged to correspond to the at least one connection module recited in the rejected claims as it appears that the electronics module 2 would be located at the position referred to in the Office Action as “15”.

However, even presuming such an interpretation, Eggert fails to disclose each and every feature recited in the rejected claims, as alleged in the Office Action. For example, it is alleged in the Office Action that the T-shaped projections 19 of the electronics module correspond to the claimed “contact means.” However, as clearly recited in the rejected claims, the “contact means” is disposed at the module location on the housing. Therefore, even if it is presumed that the terminal block assembly is to be interpreted as the housing recited in rejected claims, the T-shaped projections are not part of the terminal block assembly, but rather are a part of the electronics module 2.

It is also alleged that the terminal block 25 of the terminal block assembly corresponds to the claimed “opposing contact means per contact module.” However, the claimed “opposing contact means” is recited as being part of the connection module and not part of the housing. In contrast to the plain meaning of the rejected claim, the alleged opposing contact means (the terminal block 25) is part of the terminal block assembly and not part of the electronics module.

Moreover, the T-shaped projections 19 (alleged to correspond to the contact means as claimed) do not contact the terminal block assemblies (alleged to correspond to the claimed opposing contact means). As clearly shown at Fig. 1 of Eggert, there is no contact between the T-shaped projections 19 and the terminal block 25.

It is further alleged that Eggert shows an “insulating means arranged at least at one of an end and a longitudinal side at least one of the contact means and the opposing contact means.” As can best be determined in the Office Action it appears that the Examiner alleges that the guide rails 30 of the electronics module 2 correspond to the “insulating means” as claimed. However, the guide rails 30 are not arranged at least at one of an end and a longitudinal side of the alleged

contact means 19 and the alleged opposing contact means 25 as clearly shown in Figs. 1 and 2 of Eggert.

Further the guide rails 30 are on the two sides of the housing of the electronics module 2 so that they are accurately plugged into the plug-in terminals 11, as shown in Fig. 1.

Additionally, regarding dependent claim 2, Eggert fails to disclose that the insulating means includes an insulating bracket. As discussed above, it appears that the Examiner alleges the guide rails 30 to correspond to the insulating means. In rejecting claim 2 it is then alleged that Eggert discloses an insulating bracket at the terminal block assembly 3 as shown in Fig. 2. However, as there is no disclosure in Eggert of the guide rails being an insulating means or of the terminal block assembly 3 being an insulating bracket, Eggert does not disclose the features recited in rejected claim.

Accordingly, Eggert fails to show any of the features recited in the rejected claims and therefore cannot form the basis of a rejection under 35 USC § 102. As such, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, Applicant earnestly solicits reconsideration and allowance of all of the pending claims.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant(s) hereby petition(s) for a one (1) months extension of time for filing a reply to the Office Action and submit the required \$120.00 extension fee herewith.

Should there be any matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 

John W. Fitzpatrick, Reg. No. 41,018
P.O. Box 8910
Reston, Virginia 20195
(703) 668-8000

DJD/JWF/lmg